

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Ludlow Junior School



Date of last review: September 2026

Date of next review: September 2027

Date approved: September 2026

Approved by: Full Governing Body

1. Aims

At Ludlow Junior School, we believe that all pupils should receive a high-quality, enriching learning experience in a safe, inclusive and nurturing environment. We are committed to ensuring that every child is known, valued and supported to achieve their full potential academically, socially and emotionally.

This policy sets out how Ludlow Junior School fulfils its moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. Safeguarding is at the heart of everything we do and underpins all aspects of school life.

Everyone working in our school has a responsibility to promote the welfare of children and young people and to keep them safe. We are committed to working in a way that protects children from harm, supports their wellbeing and helps them to thrive.

We make every effort to provide a safe and welcoming environment underpinned by a culture of openness where children and adults feel secure, resilient, valued and respected. We encourage pupils to talk about any worries or concerns, knowing that they will be listened to and taken seriously. We ensure that children know which adults they can approach for help and support.

At Ludlow Junior School, safeguarding is underpinned by a culture of vigilance, professional curiosity and early intervention. We believe that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that effective relationships with children, families and external agencies are central to keeping children safe.

The school aims to ensure that:

- Appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare.
- All staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities and act upon concerns without delay.
- Staff are appropriately trained and supported to recognise and respond to safeguarding concerns.
- Children feel safe, valued and listened to.
- Effective partnerships are maintained with families and external agencies to promote the welfare and safety of children.
- Safeguarding arrangements are robust, effective and compliant with statutory guidance.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees working within Ludlow Junior School.

This policy also applies to:

- All pupils and students.
- All staff (teaching and support staff).
- Volunteers.
- Contractors.

- Visitors to the school site.
- Governors.
- Trustees and Members of the Trust Board.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. All adults working in or on behalf of the school have a duty to protect children from harm, identify concerns at the earliest opportunity and take appropriate action to ensure children receive the help and support they need.

This policy applies whenever staff are acting in their professional capacity on behalf of the school, including during educational visits, residential visits, extra-curricular activities, before and after school provision, sporting activities and any other activity organised or overseen by the school.

All staff, governors, trustees, volunteers, contractors and visitors are expected to understand and follow the safeguarding procedures set out within this policy and to work in accordance with statutory guidance, local safeguarding arrangements and the school's safeguarding systems and procedures.

3. Definitions

- **Abuse** is a form of maltreatment of a child and may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm.
- **Alleged perpetrator(s)** and **perpetrator(s)** are widely used and recognised terms. However, we will think carefully about what terminology we use (especially in front of children) as, in some cases, abusive behaviour can be harmful to the perpetrator too. We will decide what is appropriate and which terms to use on a case-by-case basis.
- **Child protection** is an aspect of safeguarding but is focused on how we respond to children who have been significantly harmed or are at risk of significant harm.
- **Child** refers to all young people who have not yet reached their 18th birthday. On the whole, this will apply to pupils of our school; however, the policy will extend to visiting children and students from other establishments.
- **DSL** refers to Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- **DDSL** refers to Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- **Local Governing Committee** in this policy, where reference is made to the Governing Committee, this means the Local Governing Committee (LGC) of the school.
- **Making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes** is where children share nude or semi-nude images, such as photographs, videos or live streams. This also includes images that are digitally altered or wholly AI-generated (sometimes called 'deepfakes' or 'deep nudes') that otherwise appear to be a photograph or video. The sharing of nude or semi-nude images requires a safeguarding response whether they are consensual or non-consensual.
- **Neglect** is a form of abuse and is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development.

- **Parent** refers to birth parents and other adults in a parenting role, for example adoptive parents, stepparents, guardians, foster carers and kinship carers.
- **Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means:**
 - Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge.
 - Protecting children from maltreatment whether that is within or outside the home, including online.
 - Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development.
 - Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
 - Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
- The following three **safeguarding partners** are identified in Keeping Children Safe in Education and defined in the Children Act 2004, as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017. They make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, including identifying and responding to their needs:
 - The local authority (LA).
 - Integrated Care Boards (ICBs).
 - The chief officer of police for the local authority area.
- **School** means Ludlow Junior School.
- The term **staff** applies to all those working for or on behalf of the school, full-time or part-time, in either a paid or voluntary capacity. This also includes governors.
- **Victim** refers to the person who is adversely affected by a stressful or distressing situation or harmful or humiliating act. It is important to recognise that not everyone who has been subjected to abuse considers themselves a victim or would want to be described in this way.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

We recognise that all staff, Trustees and Governors have a full and active part to play in ensuring there is a culture of safeguarding that is effective in protecting our pupils from harm. We recognise that staff anxiety around child protection can compromise good practice and so have established clear lines of accountability, training and advice to support the process and individual staff within that process.

The school plays a crucial role in preventative education. This is in the context of a whole-school approach to preparing pupils for life in modern Britain, and a culture of zero tolerance of sexism, racism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia, sexual violence/harassment, derogatory behaviour or other forms of physical violence and conflict.

Staff understand that they all have a key role to play in identifying concerns early and providing help for children where necessary through referral to appropriate early help services or Children's Services.

During term time, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will be available during school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns. When the DSL is absent, the deputies will act as cover.

Key Personnel	Name(s)	Email contact
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Ryan O'Hearn	head@ludlowjuniorschool.org.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL)	Debbie Rooke Emma Stevenson Gillie Hotston Vanessa Chandler Maria Locke Dan Palmer	Debbie.Rooke@ludlowjunior.org.uk Emma.Stevenson@ludlowjunior.org.uk Gillie.Hotson@ludlowjunior.org.uk Vanessa.Chandler@ludlowjunior.org.uk Maria.Locke@ludlowjunior.org.uk Dan.Palmer@ludlowjunior.org.uk
Trustee specifically nominated for safeguarding (all governors responsibility)	Janine House	Safeguarding@ludlowjunior.org.uk
Nominated Trustee for allegations against Headteacher	Sally Howells	sally.howells@ludlowjunior.org.uk

4.1 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is a member of the Senior Leadership Team and takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) in the school.

The DSL duties include:

- Ensuring child protection policies are known, understood and used appropriately by staff.
- Ensuring school safeguarding procedures are regularly reviewed and reflect current statutory guidance.
- Acting as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff on child protection and safeguarding matters.
- Liaising with Children's Services and the police regarding ongoing enquiries and investigations.
- Acting as a point of contact with safeguarding partners.
- Making and managing referrals to Children's Services, the police or other agencies.
- Keeping detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns, discussions and decisions made, including the rationale for those decisions.
- Taking part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings.
- Liaising with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where allegations are made against staff.
- Making staff aware of safeguarding training and updates.
- Ensuring child protection files are transferred securely when pupils move schools.
- Ensuring that staff (including temporary staff) and volunteers:
 - Are informed of our systems that support safeguarding, including this policy, as part of their induction.
 - Understand and follow the procedures included in this policy, particularly those concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect.

- Communicating this policy to parents and carers when their child joins the school and via the school website.
- Ensuring that the DSL has appropriate time, funding, training and resources, and that there is always adequate cover if the DSL is absent.
- Making decisions regarding all low-level concerns, though they may wish to collaborate with the DSL on this.
- Overseeing the safe use of technology, and devices such as mobile phones and cameras in the school.
- Ensuring safeguarding remains a priority across all aspects of school life and that safeguarding policies and procedures are implemented effectively.
- Creating and maintaining a strong safeguarding culture in which children feel safe, are listened to and can access support when needed.

4.2 The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads

Our Deputy DSLs are trained to the same level as the DSL and support the DSL with safeguarding matters on a day-to-day basis. The ultimate lead responsibility for child protection remains with the DSL.

4.3 The Safeguarding Link Trustee

As the Trust Board's Link Trustee for safeguarding and child protection, the Link Trustee is responsible for:

- Staying up to date on relevant safeguarding guidance and policy, including local safeguarding arrangements, and ensuring the Board is aware of any changes to safeguarding responsibilities.
- Reporting to the Board following engagement with school leaders and safeguarding staff.
- Ensuring that safeguarding is given suitable coverage and prominence within the Board's strategic discussions.
- Contributing to Board discussions and ensuring decision-making is based on a sound understanding of legal requirements and safeguarding responsibilities.
- Ensuring that the results of safeguarding audits are shared with the Board and that any concerns are addressed appropriately.
- Understanding the requirements of the Governance Handbook and Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- Supporting and appropriately challenging the DSL on safeguarding practice within the school.
- Confirming that consistent and compliant safeguarding practice takes place across the school.
- Reporting to the Trust Board and Local Governing Committee on the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements.

- Monitoring safeguarding policies, procedures and training.
- Meeting regularly with the DSL to discuss safeguarding priorities, monitoring activities and actions arising from safeguarding reviews.

The DSL and Safeguarding Trustee meet regularly to discuss safeguarding issues and to agree actions that will continuously improve safeguarding practice within the school.

Trustees review the school-specific elements of this policy annually and monitor the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements. The Chair of Trustees receives reports of allegations against the Headteacher and acts on behalf of the Trustees where required.

Trustees are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and receive appropriate safeguarding training to enable them to fulfil their duties effectively.

4.4 All Staff at Our School

All staff will:

- Read and understand Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education in full and review this guidance at least annually, as well as having a clear understanding of Part Five.
- Confirm annually that they have read and understood relevant safeguarding guidance.
- Reinforce the importance of online safety when communicating with pupils, parents and carers.
- Help create an environment where children feel safe to share concerns and seek support.
- Provide a safe and inclusive environment where all pupils are treated with dignity and respect.

All staff will be aware of:

- The school's safeguarding systems and procedures, including this Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, the Staff Code of Conduct, the role and identity of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads.
- The school's attendance procedures and procedures for children who are absent from education.
- The early help process and their role in identifying emerging needs and providing support.
- The process for making referrals to Children's Services and other agencies.
- The signs and indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation and modern slavery.
- The signs of child-on-child abuse, child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation, county lines activity, serious violence, radicalisation and extremism.
- The safeguarding issues that can often overlap, including substance misuse, mental health difficulties, missing education, criminal exploitation and online harm.
- The fact that children can be at risk of harm both inside and outside the home, including online.
- The importance of reassuring victims that they are being taken seriously and will be supported and kept safe.
- That mental health concerns can sometimes become safeguarding concerns and may indicate that a child has suffered abuse, neglect or exploitation.

- That children who are, or who are perceived to be, lesbian, gay or bisexual can be vulnerable to discriminatory bullying.
- The potential vulnerabilities of children who are questioning their gender.
- That children and families may experience multiple and overlapping vulnerabilities.
- What to look for when identifying children who may require additional help, support or protection.

All staff are expected to maintain an attitude of "it could happen here" and act immediately if they have concerns about a child's welfare.

5. Our Strong Safeguarding Culture

5.1 Why It Is Important

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and it is the duty of Ludlow Junior School to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Children includes everyone under the age of 18. This is our core safeguarding principle.

In adhering to this principle, we focus on providing a safe and welcoming environment for all children regardless of age, ability, culture, race, language, religion, sex, gender identity or sexual orientation. All children have equal rights to support and protection.

One of the cornerstones of our safeguarding culture is this policy and the procedures contained within it. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, trustees and governors, all of whom are trained in their safeguarding responsibilities. We review this policy annually to reflect changes in legislation, guidance and best practice.

This policy should be read alongside the other safeguarding-related policies referred to within this document.

5.2 What It Means for Our Pupils

We work with our local safeguarding partners and a range of external agencies to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. This includes providing early help where additional needs are identified and contributing to multi-agency plans and interventions where appropriate.

All staff have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may indicate a child is at risk of harm. Any child or adult involved in a safeguarding concern will receive appropriate support.

Our safeguarding culture ensures that children are treated with respect and involved in decisions that affect them. We encourage positive, respectful and safe behaviour and model these expectations through our daily interactions with pupils and families.

Identifying safeguarding concerns often begins with recognising changes in attendance, behaviour, presentation or wellbeing. Staff understand that such changes may be indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation or unmet need. Challenging behaviour may also be an indicator that a child requires safeguarding support.

All staff will reassure children that their concerns and disclosures will be taken seriously, that they will be listened to and that they will be supported and kept safe.

6. Safeguarding Legislation and Guidance

The following safeguarding legislation and guidance has been considered when drafting this policy:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026).
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026).
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (2015).
- Prevent Duty Guidance: Guidance for specified authorities in England and Wales (2023).
- The Equality Act 2010.
- The Teachers' Standards (2012).
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.
- Section 157 of the Education Act 2002.
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.
- The Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- PACE Code C 2019.
- Crime and Policing Act 2026.

7. Children Who May Be Particularly Vulnerable

Some children are at greater risk of abuse, neglect and exploitation. This increased risk can be caused by many factors including social exclusion, isolation, discrimination and prejudice. To ensure that all pupils receive equal protection, we give special consideration to children who:

- Are vulnerable because of their race, ethnicity, religion, special educational needs, disability, gender identity or sexuality.
- Are young carers.
- Are pregnant or are parents themselves.
- Are involved in the court system or have a family member in prison.
- Are vulnerable to being bullied or engaging in bullying.
- Are at risk of sexual exploitation, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, or being drawn into extremism.
- Live in chaotic or unsupportive home situations.
- Live transient lifestyles or live away from home or in temporary accommodation.
- Are affected by parental substance abuse, domestic abuse or parental mental health needs.
- Do not have English as a first language.

- Experience or have experienced bereavement or mental health difficulties.
- Are in care, have previously been in care, are privately fostered or have returned home to their family from care.
- Have experienced multiple suspensions and are at risk of, or have been, permanently excluded.

At Ludlow Junior School we recognise that vulnerability is not always visible and that children may experience multiple vulnerabilities at the same time. Staff are trained to identify emerging needs and provide support at the earliest opportunity.

8. Children with Special Educational Needs, Disabilities or Health Issues

Children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), or certain medical or physical health conditions, can face additional safeguarding challenges.

Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse, neglect and exploitation in this group of children, including:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration.
- Being more prone to peer group isolation than other children.
- The potential for children with SEND or certain medical conditions being disproportionately impacted by bullying or harmful behaviours without outwardly showing signs.
- Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.
- The need for intimate care or circumstances where children are isolated from others.
- Greater dependency on adults for care and support.
- Difficulties with cognitive understanding, including understanding the difference between fact and fiction in online content and recognising the consequences of their actions online.

Staff understand that children with SEND are statistically more likely to experience abuse and neglect than their peers and may require additional support to communicate concerns. Staff are trained to be aware of and identify these additional barriers to ensure this group of children is appropriately safeguarded.

The DSL and SENDCo work closely together to ensure that safeguarding considerations are fully understood and addressed for children with SEND and additional needs.

9. Children Who are Absent from Education

Children being absent from education for prolonged periods, on an increasing basis and/or on repeat occasions, and children with unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education, can be an indicator of abuse, neglect and exploitation, including sexual abuse or exploitation, trafficking, modern slavery, child criminal exploitation, mental health problems, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage. Our staff are alert to these risks.

We closely monitor attendance, absence and exclusions and our DSL will take appropriate and proactive action including notifying the local authority, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions, on an increasing basis and/or are missing for periods during the school day.

10. Alternative Provision

Where a pupil is placed with an alternative provision provider, we continue to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil and will ensure we are satisfied that the placement meets the pupil's needs.

11. Mental Health

Schools have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their pupils.

All staff are aware that mental health problems can be an indicator that a child has suffered, or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation, and that in some cases they can develop into safeguarding concerns. Staff are also aware that where children have suffered adverse childhood experiences those experiences can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education.

All staff are aware that there are potential warning signs when a child is struggling with their mental health. These include:

- Significant changes in behaviour.
- Ongoing difficulty sleeping.
- Withdrawing from social situations.
- Not wanting to do things they usually like.
- Physical signs of self-harm or neglecting themselves.

Where staff are concerned that a child's mental health is also a safeguarding concern, they will discuss it with the DSL or a deputy who will alert other relevant agencies as necessary.

12. Children Who are Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual

The fact that a child or a young person may be lesbian, gay, or bisexual is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm. Unfortunately, children who are lesbian, gay, or bisexual, or are simply perceived to be lesbian, gay, or bisexual, can be vulnerable to discriminatory bullying by other children. The risk to these children can be compounded where children who are lesbian, gay, or bisexual lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open.

Our staff endeavour to reduce the barriers and provide a safe space for those children to speak out or share their concerns with them.

13. Children Who are Questioning Their Gender

The school will take a sensitive, child-centred approach to pupils who are questioning their gender identity or who have the protected characteristic of gender reassignment, having regard at all times to the welfare of the individual pupil and the welfare of other pupils.

The school will respect both gender-critical and gender-affirming beliefs held within the school community and will not tolerate bullying, harassment or discrimination in connection with any such beliefs.

The school will not initiate any social transition actions. Where a child, parent or carer requests support in relation to gender identity, including any form of social transition (such as changes to name, pronouns, or presentation), the school will only implement any changes following a school-level decision made in accordance with the following process:

- **DSL involvement:** The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will be informed and involved in the decision-making process from the outset, as gender-related requests may intersect with safeguarding considerations.
- **Parental engagement:** Parents and carers will be engaged as a matter of priority and their views treated with importance. The school will not implement any social transition arrangements without parental knowledge and engagement, save in exceptional circumstances where doing so would place the child at greater risk of harm.
- **Exception to parental engagement:** Where staff have reasonable grounds to conclude that involving parents or carers would create a greater risk of harm to the child, the DSL will determine what safeguarding action is appropriate before parents are contacted and before any decision is taken. Any decision to proceed without parental engagement will be documented with clear reasons.
- **Professional advice:** Where appropriate, the school will seek advice from relevant professionals, which may include the school's SENDCo, relevant health professionals, or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) where applicable. The school will be alert to the possibility that gender-questioning presentations may co-occur with, or be influenced by, other factors including neurodevelopmental conditions, mental health difficulties or other needs.
- **Cautious approach:** The school will take a careful and considered approach, recognising that social transition is an active intervention with potentially significant consequences. In primary schools, support for full social transition will be agreed only in very rare circumstances.
- **Record-keeping:** All discussions, decisions and the reasons for those decisions will be recorded in writing and stored securely and confidentially. Records will be kept under review and revisited if circumstances change.
- **Review:** Any agreed arrangements will be subject to periodic review. Where circumstances change, the DSL will be informed immediately and arrangements will be reassessed.

The school will ensure that its facilities arrangements comply with its legal obligations in relation to biological sex and with its safeguarding duties.

- **Toilets:** The school will not permit a child to use toilet facilities designated for the opposite biological sex. Where a pupil does not wish to use toilet facilities designated for their biological sex, the school will consider whether an alternative arrangement, such as a self-contained individual toilet, can be provided without compromising single-sex provision or the safety, comfort, privacy, or dignity of the pupil or other pupils. Any such arrangement will be recorded and reviewed regularly.
- **Changing rooms and showers:** The school will not permit a pupil aged 11 or over to undress in the presence of a pupil of the opposite biological sex and will not permit access to changing rooms or shower facilities designated for the opposite biological sex as part of any social transition arrangements. Where a pupil does not wish to use facilities designated for their biological sex, the school will consider alternative arrangements that do not compromise single-sex provision and will keep clear records, communicate appropriately and review regularly.
- **Overnight accommodation:** The school will not permit a pupil to share overnight accommodation with a pupil of the opposite biological sex. Where a pupil does not wish to share accommodation with a pupil of the same biological sex, the school will seek to identify alternative arrangements where possible without compromising safety, comfort, privacy or dignity and will document those arrangements.

For safeguarding purposes, relevant staff will be made aware of a pupil's biological sex in all cases and a pupil's biological sex will be recorded accurately wherever it is recorded by the school.

14. Child-on-Child Abuse

Child-on-child abuse, children harming other children, is unacceptable and will be taken seriously; it will not be tolerated or passed off as 'banter', 'just having a laugh', 'part of growing up' or 'boys being boys'. The school takes a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment and sexual violence; it is never acceptable, and it will not be tolerated.

It is more likely that boys will be perpetrators of child-on-child abuse and girls victims, but allegations will be dealt with in the same manner, regardless of whether they are made by boys or girls.

All staff are aware that child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding issue for both the victim and alleged perpetrator, and they are clear about the school's policy and procedures for addressing child-on-child abuse and maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'.

Child-on-child abuse can take many forms, including:

- Physical abuse such as shaking, hitting, biting, kicking or hair pulling.
- Bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying.

- Sexual violence such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence).
- Sexual harassment such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse and which may include misogyny/misandry.
- Serious physical assault and harm, or the threat of harm with a weapon.
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.
- Upskirting, which involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission for the purposes of sexual gratification or to cause humiliation, distress or alarm.
- Consensual and non-consensual making or sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (including those generated by AI) and including pressuring others to share sexual content.
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (also known as teenage relationship abuse) such as a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual or emotional abuse.
- Initiation/hazing, used to induct newcomers into sports teams or school groups by subjecting them to potentially humiliating or abusing trials with the aim of creating a bond.

Different gender issues can be prevalent when dealing with child-on-child abuse, for example girls being sexually touched/assaulted or boys being subject to initiation/hazing type violence.

All staff recognise that even if there are no reported cases of child-on-child abuse, such abuse may still be taking place but is not being reported.

14.1 Minimising Risk

We take the following steps to minimise or prevent the risk of child-on-child abuse:

- Promoting an open and honest environment where children feel safe and confident to share their concerns and worries.
- Using assemblies to outline acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.
- Using RSHE and PSHE to educate and reinforce our messages through stories, role play, current affairs and other suitable activities.
- Ensuring that the school is well supervised, especially in areas where children might be vulnerable.
- If there is an allegation of harm by one child against another which might require physically separating a child from one or other children, the school can temporarily forbid a child from attending the school premises to minimise risk. This is not exclusion on disciplinary grounds but is a separation of pupils for safeguarding purposes. This will only occur when separating pupils is essential, and there is not a practical way to allow one or more pupils involved to remain on school premises. Decisions on this will be made on a case-by-case basis with the DSL taking a lead role.

Alongside this, we will ensure school staff are trained to understand:

- How to recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports.
- That even if there are no reports of child-on-child abuse in school, it does not mean it is not happening. Staff should maintain an attitude of “it could happen here”.
- That if they have any concerns about a child’s welfare, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told, and that victims may not always make a direct report. For example:
 - Children can show signs or act in ways they hope adults will notice and react to.
 - A friend may make a report.
 - A member of staff may overhear a conversation.
 - A child’s behaviour might indicate that something is wrong.
- That certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, gender, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation.
- That a pupil harming a peer could be a sign that the child is being abused themselves, and that this would fall under the scope of this policy.
- The important role they have to play in preventing child-on-child abuse and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it.
- That they should speak to the DSL if they have any concerns.
- That social media is likely to play a role in the fall-out from any incident or alleged incident, including for potential contact between the victim, alleged perpetrator(s) and friends from either side.
- That exposure to misogynistic/misandrist content online can indicate a safeguarding concern and requires early discussion with the DSL.

14.2 Investigating Allegations

All allegations of child-on-child abuse should be passed to the DSL immediately who will investigate and manage the allegation as follows:

- **Gather information** – children and staff will be spoken with immediately to gather relevant information.
- **Decide on action** – if it is believed that any child is at risk of significant harm, a referral will be made to Children’s Services. The DSL will then work with Children’s Services to decide on next steps, which may include contacting the police. In other cases, we may follow our behaviour policy alongside this Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- **Inform parents** – we will usually discuss concerns with the parents. However, our focus is the safety and wellbeing of the pupil and so if the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to a child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from Children’s Services and/or the police before parents are contacted.
- **Record** – all concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions will be recorded in writing, kept confidential and stored securely on the school’s safeguarding recording system and/or in the child’s separate child protection file. The record will include a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern, details of how the concern was followed up and resolved, and a note of the action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.

Where allegations of a sexual nature are made, the school will follow the statutory guidance set out in Part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education. The DSL will decide on a case-by-case basis whether to carry out an immediate risk and needs assessment.

Reports of rape or assault by penetration are especially serious. While the school establishes the facts and liaises with Children's Services and the police, the alleged perpetrator(s) may be removed from any shared classes with the victim. The school will also consider how to maintain a reasonable physical separation between the victim and alleged perpetrator(s) across school, including before or after school-based activities, and on transport to and from school.

Children can report allegations or concerns of child-on-child abuse to any staff member and that staff member will pass on the allegation to the DSL in accordance with this policy.

To ensure children can report their concerns easily, Ludlow Junior School actively promotes a culture where pupils know that all adults in school are available to help them. Children can report concerns to any trusted adult, including their class teacher, a member of the safeguarding team, support staff or a senior leader. Safeguarding messages are regularly reinforced through assemblies, PSHE lessons, classroom discussions and pastoral support so that children understand how to seek help for themselves or others.

Our staff reassure all victims that they are being taken seriously, regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward, and that they will be supported and kept safe. Our staff will never give a victim the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment, nor will victims be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

Abuse that occurs online or outside of school will not be downplayed and will be treated equally seriously. We recognise that sexual violence and sexual harassment occurring online can introduce a number of complex factors. Amongst other things, this can include widespread abuse or harm across a number of social media platforms that leads to repeat victimisation.

The support required for the pupil who has been harmed will depend on their particular circumstance and the nature of the abuse. The support we provide could include counselling, mentoring or restorative work.

Support may also be required for the pupil who caused harm. We will seek to understand why the pupil acted in this way and consider what support may be required to help the pupil and/or change behaviours. The consequences for the harm caused or intended will be addressed.

15. Serious Violence

Serious violence is a continuing safeguarding concern which may involve physical assault, carrying, threatening with, or using weapons, often in the context of peer conflict or bullying, and criminal exploitation. All staff are aware of the signs that a child may be at risk of or involved in serious violence, including:

- An increased absence from school or college or a significant decline in educational performance.
- A change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups.
- Signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries.
- Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation.

16. Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Both CCE and CSE are forms of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate, or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. This power imbalance can be due to a range of factors, including:

- Age.
- Gender.
- Sexual identity.
- Cognitive ability.
- Physical strength.
- Status.
- Access to economic or other resources.

The abuse can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. It can also be perpetrated by an organised network or gang, and the victim may identify as being part of this group. They can be one-off occurrences or a series of incidents over time and may or may not involve force or violence. Exploitation can be physical and take place online.

CCE and CSE can affect children, both male and female, and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation. This may constitute modern slavery.

16.1 Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting or pickpocketing, being forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others.

Children can become trapped by this exploitation as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence or entrap and coerce them into debt. They may be coerced into carrying weapons such as knives or carry a knife for a sense of protection.

Children involved in criminal exploitation often commit crimes themselves. They may still have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to.

It is important to note that the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys, and both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

16.2 CCE Indicators

CCE indicators can include children who:

- Appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions.
- Associate with other young people involved in exploitation.
- Suffer from changes in emotional well-being.
- Misuse drugs or alcohol.
- Go missing for periods of time or regularly return home late.
- Regularly or increasingly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

16.3 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

CSE is a form of child sexual abuse which may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse.

CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence and may happen without the child's immediate knowledge, for example through others sharing videos or images of them on social media.

CSE can affect any child who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. This includes 16 and 17-year-olds who can legally consent to have sex. CSE can be committed by an individual or an organised network and most sexual abuse is committed by those previously known to the victim. Some children may not realise they are being exploited, for example because they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship.

Sexual exploitation is a serious crime and can have a long-lasting adverse impact on a child's physical and emotional health. It may also be linked to child trafficking.

16.4 CSE Indicators

The above indicators can also be indicators of CSE, as can children who:

- Have older boyfriends or girlfriends.
- Suffer sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant.

We include the risks of criminal and sexual exploitation in our RSHE and health education curriculum. It is often the case that the child does not recognise the coercive nature of the exploitative relationship and does not recognise themselves as a victim.

Victims of criminal and sexual exploitation can be boys or girls, and it can have an adverse impact on a child's physical and emotional health.

All staff are aware of the indicators that children are at risk of or are experiencing CCE or CSE. All concerns are reported immediately to the DSL. Staff must always act on any concerns that a child is suffering from or is at risk of criminal or sexual exploitation.

16.5 County Lines

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs around the country using dedicated mobile phone lines. Children and vulnerable adults are exploited to move, store and sell drugs and money, with offenders often using coercion, intimidation, violence and weapons to ensure compliance of victims.

County lines exploitation can occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child. This power imbalance can be due to the same range of factors set out earlier in this section.

Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations, including schools. Indicators of county lines include those indicators set out above, with the main indicator being missing episodes from home and/or school.

Additional specific indicators that may be present where a child is criminally exploited include children who:

- Go missing and are subsequently found in areas away from home.
- Have been the victim or perpetrator of serious violence (e.g. knife crime).
- Are involved in receiving requests for drugs via a phone line, moving drugs, handing over and collecting money for drugs.
- Are exposed to techniques such as 'plugging', where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection.
- Are found in accommodation with which they have no connection or in a hotel room where there is drug activity.
- Owe a 'debt bond' to their exploiters.
- Have their bank accounts used to facilitate drug dealing.

All staff are aware of indicators that children are at risk from or are experiencing criminal exploitation. The main indicator is increased absence during which time the child may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs or money.

17. Sharing Nudes and Semi-nudes

Sharing photos, videos, and live streams online is part of daily life for many children and young people, enabling them to share their experiences, connect with friends and record their lives. Sharing nudes and semi-nudes means the creation, sending, or posting online of nude or semi-nude images, videos, or live streams by young people under the age of 18. This could be via social media, gaming platforms, chat apps, or forums, or carried out offline between devices via services like Apple's AirDrop.

Images may be taken or created by the child themselves or by another person. They may also be digitally altered or wholly generated using artificial intelligence, including what are sometimes described as 'deepfakes' or 'deep nudes'.

The term 'nudes' is used as it is most commonly recognised by young people and more appropriately covers all types of image sharing incidents. Alternative terms used by children and young people may include 'dick pics' or 'pics'. Other terms used in education include 'sexting', youth produced sexual imagery' and 'youth involved sexual imagery'.

The motivations for taking and sharing nudes and semi-nudes are not always sexually or criminally motivated. Such images may be created and shared consensually by young people who are in relationships, as well as between those who are not in a relationship. It is also possible for a young person in a consensual relationship to be coerced into sharing an image with their partner. Incidents may also occur where:

- Children and young people find nudes and semi-nudes online and share them claiming to be from a peer.
- Children and young people digitally manipulate an image of a young person into an existing nude online.
- Images created or shared are used to abuse peers, e.g. by selling images online or obtaining images to share more widely without consent to publicly shame.

The school takes a safeguarding approach in response to all incidents involving the sharing of nude or semi-nude images, regardless of whether they are consensual or non-consensual. All such incidents require a safeguarding response, with a proportionate approach that considers the age, development, and circumstances of the children involved, as well as any elements of coercion, exploitation, or vulnerability.

All incidents involving nude or semi-nude images will be managed as follows:

- The incident will be referred to the DSL immediately and the DSL will discuss it with the appropriate staff. If necessary, the DSL may also interview the children involved.
- Parents will be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is good reason to believe that involving parents would put a child at risk of harm.
- At any point in the process, if there is a concern a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm, we will refer the matter to the police and/or children's social care.

School staff must not:

- View, copy, print, share, store or save the imagery yourself, or ask a pupil to share or download it (if you have already viewed the imagery by accident, you must report this to the DSL).
- Delete the imagery or ask the pupil to delete it.
- Ask the pupil(s) who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery (this is the DSL's responsibility).
- Share information about the incident with other members of staff, the pupil(s) it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers.
- Say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved.

The UK Council for Internet Safety updated its advice for managing incidences of sharing nudes and semi-nudes in February 2024. The school will have regard to this guidance when managing these issues.

18. Online Safety

It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. As well as educating children about online risks, we have appropriate and effective filtering and monitoring systems in place to limit the risk of children being exposed to inappropriate content, subjected to harmful online interaction with other users and to ensure their own personal online behaviour does not put them at risk. Our filtering and monitoring systems also prevent access to harmful and inappropriate content accessed through generative AI tools and products.

These filtering and monitoring systems block harmful and inappropriate content, and we take care to ensure that they do not unreasonably impact on teaching and learning. The systems are reviewed regularly (at least every academic year) to ensure their effectiveness, and staff have been identified and assigned suitable roles and responsibilities to manage these systems. We also have effective monitoring strategies in place to meet the safeguarding needs of our pupils.

We tell parents and carers what filtering and monitoring systems we use, so they can understand how we work to keep children safe.

We will also inform parents and carers of what we are asking children to do online, including the sites they need to access, and with whom they will be interacting online.

Online safety risks can be categorised into four areas of risk:

- **Content:** Being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content such as pornography, fake news, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, radicalisation, extremism, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories.
- **Contact:** Being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users or generative AI applications that simulate this, such as peer-to-peer pressure and adults posing as children or young adults to groom or exploit children.
- **Conduct:** Personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm such as making, sending and receiving explicit images, sharing other explicit images, including those generated using AI and online bullying.

- **Commerce:** Risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing or financial scams.

All staff are aware of these risk areas and should report any concerns to the DSL.

19. Handheld Devices and Cameras

The school has a separate policy regarding the safe use of mobile phones and cameras. This includes:

- Personal devices are only to be used by staff when on a designated break away from pupils. At all other times, personal devices are to be switched off.
- School devices are only to be used by staff for work purposes.
- Photographs and videos of pupils are only to be taken on school devices.
- Images of pupils will only be used in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy.

20. Domestic Abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 introduced a legal definition of domestic abuse and recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children if they see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse.

Domestic abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse, between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. It includes people who have been or are married, are or have been civil partners, have agreed to marry one another or each have or have had a parental relationship in relation to the same child. It can include psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse.

Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home. This means children can also be victims of domestic abuse.

Children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic violence in their home life. Experiencing domestic abuse and exposure to it can have a serious emotional and psychological impact on children, and in some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result. All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, wellbeing, development and ability to learn.

Where police have been called to a domestic violence incident where children are in the household and experienced that incident, the police will inform the DSL. The police will also notify us if they have reasonable grounds to believe a child may be a victim of domestic abuse. This ensures that the school has up-to-date safeguarding information about the child.

21. Honour or Faith-based Abuse

Honour or faith-based abuse (HBA) encompasses actions taken to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing.

Abuse committed in the context of preserving “honour” often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. Our staff are aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors and we take them into consideration when deciding what safeguarding action to take.

If staff are concerned that a child may be at risk of HBA or who has suffered from HBA, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead.

21.1 Female Genital Mutilation

- FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.
- FGM is carried out on females of any age, from babies to teenagers to women. Our staff are trained to be aware of risk indicators, including concerns expressed by girls about going on a long holiday during the summer break. If staff are concerned that a child may be at risk of FGM or who has suffered FGM, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead.
- Teachers are also under legal duty to report to the police where they discover that FGM has been carried out on a child under 18. In such circumstances, teachers will personally report the matter to the police as well as informing the designated safeguarding lead.

21.2 Forced Marriage

- A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats, or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Coercion may include physical, psychological, financial, sexual, and emotional pressure or abuse.
- Forced marriage is illegal. It is also illegal to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their eighteenth birthday, even if violence, threats, or another form of coercion are not used. As with the existing forced marriage law, this applies to non-binding, unofficial ‘marriages’ as well as legal marriages.
- Our staff are trained to be aware of risk indicators, which may include being taken abroad and not being allowed to return to the UK.
- Forced marriage is not the same as arranged marriage, which is common in many cultures.
- If staff are concerned that a child may be at risk of forced marriage, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead.

22. Radicalisation and Extremism

Extremism is defined as vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. Radicalisation refers to the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of terrorist violence.

Children are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Whilst Islamic fundamentalism is the most widely publicised, extremism and radicalisation can occur in other cultures, religions and beliefs, including the far right and white supremacy. Our staff are trained to identify those at risk of being radicalised or drawn into extremism.

All staff will have training on the government's anti-radicalisation strategy, Prevent, to enable them to identify children at risk of becoming involved with or supporting terrorism, and to challenge extremist ideas.

If staff are concerned that a child may be at risk of radicalisation or being drawn into extremism, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead.

23. Staff/Pupil Relationships

Staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards pupils is unacceptable and that it is a criminal offence for them to engage in any sexual activity with a pupil under the age of 18.

We provide our staff with advice regarding their personal online activity, and we have clear rules regarding electronic communications and online contact with pupils. It is considered a serious disciplinary issue if staff breach these rules.

Our Staff Code of Conduct sets out our expectations of staff and is signed by all staff members.

24. Safeguarding Concerns and Allegations Made About Staff, Including Supply Teachers, Volunteers, and Contractors

If a safeguarding concern or allegation is made about a member of staff, supply teacher, volunteer, or contractor, or relates to incidents that happened when an individual or organisation was using the school premises for the purposes of running activities for children our set procedures must be followed.

Our safeguarding concerns and allegations made about staff, supply teachers, volunteers, and contractors' procedure can be accessed through the school's Managing Concerns and Allegations Against Employees, Agency Staff, Contractors and Volunteers Policy and the full procedure for managing such allegations or concerns are set out in Part Four of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

Safeguarding concerns or allegations made about staff who no longer work at the school will be reported to the police.

25. Whistleblowing if you have concerns about a colleague

It is important that all staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about a colleague's practice. All such concerns should be reported to the Headteacher, unless the complaint is about the Headteacher, in which case the concern should be reported to the Chair of Governors.

Staff may also report their concerns directly to children's social care or the police if they believe direct reporting is necessary to secure action.

The school's Whistleblowing Policy allows staff to raise concerns or make allegations and for an appropriate enquiry to take place.

26. Low-Level Concerns

This applies to all concerns (including allegations) about members of staff, including supply teachers, trainee teachers, volunteers and contractors, which do not meet the harm threshold.

Concerns may arise through, for example:

- Suspicion.
- Complaint.
- Safeguarding concern or allegation from another member of staff.
- Disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside the school.
- Pre-employment vetting checks.

We recognise the importance of responding to and dealing with any concerns in a timely manner to safeguard the welfare of children.

The procedure for managing low-level concerns is set out in the school's Managing Concerns and Allegations Against Employees, Agency Staff, Contractors and Volunteers Policy.

27. Staff, Trustee and Governor Training

Our staff receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety and an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring) which is regularly updated. In addition, all staff receive safeguarding and child protection updates on a regular basis to ensure they are up to date and empowered to provide exceptional safeguarding to our pupils.

New staff and volunteers receive a briefing during their induction which covers this Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and our Staff Code of Conduct, how to report and record concerns and information about our Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy DSLs.

Our Trustees and Governors receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring) training at induction which equips them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that there is an effective approach to safeguarding. This training is updated at least annually.

Our Link Trustee for Safeguarding and Safeguarding Governor receive additional training to empower them to support and challenge the Designated Safeguarding Lead and support the delivery of high-quality safeguarding.

28. Safer Recruitment

The Governing Committee and Senior Leadership Team are responsible for ensuring that we follow recruitment procedures which help to deter, reject, or identify people who might harm children. When doing so we check and verify the applicant's identity, qualifications, and work history in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and local safeguarding arrangements.

All relevant staff (involved in early years settings and/or before or after school care for children under eight) are made aware of the disqualification from childcare guidance and their obligations to disclose to us relevant information that could lead to disqualification.

We ensure that our volunteers are appropriately checked and supervised when in school. We check the identity of all contractors working on site and request DBS checks where required by Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. Contractors who have not undergone checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised during the school day.

When using supply staff, we will obtain written confirmation from supply agencies or third-party organisations that staff they provide have been appropriately checked and are suitable to work with children. Trainee teachers will be checked either by the school or by the training provider, from whom written confirmation will be obtained confirming their suitability to work with children.

The school maintains a Single Central Record of the recruitment checks.

29. Site Security

Visitors are asked to sign in at the school reception and are given a badge, which confirms they have permission to be on site. If visitors have undergone the appropriate checks, they can be provided with unescorted access to the school site. Visitors who have not undergone the required checks will be escorted at all times.

30. Child Protection Procedures

30.1 Recognising Abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse may be committed by adult men or women and by other children and young people.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 refers to four categories of abuse. These are set out at Appendix One along with indicators of abuse and neglect.

30.2 Taking Action

Any child could become a victim of abuse. Key points for staff to remember for taking action are:

- In an emergency take the action necessary to help the child, if necessary, call 999.
- Complete a record of concern form and report your concern to the DSL as soon as possible.
- Share information on a need-to-know basis only and do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family.

30.3 If you are concerned about a pupil's welfare

Staff may suspect that a pupil may be at risk. This may be because the pupil's behaviour has changed, their appearance has changed, or physical signs are noticed. In these circumstances, staff will give the pupil the opportunity to talk and ask if they are OK.

If the pupil does reveal that they are being harmed, staff should follow the advice below.

Staff are aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. Children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or are being threatened, which could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This will not prevent our staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to our DSL if they have concerns about a child.

30.4 If a pupil discloses to you

If a pupil tells a member of staff about a risk to their safety or wellbeing, the staff member will:

- Remain calm and not overreact.
- Allow them to speak freely.
- Not be afraid of silences.
- Not ask investigative questions.

- Give reassuring nods or words of comfort – “I’m so sorry this has happened”, “I want to help”, “This isn’t your fault”, “You are doing the right thing in talking to me”.
- Not automatically offer physical touch as comfort.
- Let the pupil know that in order to help them they must pass the information on to the DSL.
- Not promise to keep it a secret.
- Tell the pupil what will happen next and give them an opportunity to ask questions about what will happen next.
- Write up your conversation as soon as possible in the child’s own words. Stick to the facts and do not put your own judgement on it.
- Report verbally to the DSL as soon as possible, even if the child has promised to do it by themselves.
- Let the pupil know when they can expect to be updated or receive more information, emphasising that the pupil can talk to them or the DSL at any time.

Bear in mind that some children may:

- Not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited or neglected.
- Not recognise their experiences as harmful.
- Feel embarrassed, humiliated or threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability, sexual orientation and/or language barriers.

None of this should stop you from having a ‘professional curiosity’ and speaking to the DSL if you have concerns about a child.

31. Notifying Parents

The school will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a pupil with their parents. If the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from children’s social care and/or the police before parents are notified.

32. Referral to Children’s Social Care

The DSL will make a referral to children’s social care if it is believed that a pupil is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm. The pupil (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents will be told that a referral is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the child.

33. Reporting Directly to Child Protection Agencies

Staff should follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy. However, they may also share information directly with children’s social care or the police if they are convinced that a direct report is required or if the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the deputies, the Headteacher or the Chair of Governors are not available, and a referral is required immediately.

34. Confidentiality and Sharing Information

Child protection issues necessitate a high level of confidentiality. Staff should only discuss concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Headteacher or Chair of Governors.

34.1 Sharing Information

- The DSL will normally obtain consent from the pupil and/or parents to share child protection information. Where there is good reason to do so, the DSL may share information without consent and will record the reason for deciding to do so.
- Information sharing will take place in a timely and secure manner and only when it is necessary and proportionate to do so and the information to be shared is relevant, adequate and accurate.
- Information sharing decisions will be recorded, whether or not the decision is taken to share.
- The UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 do not prevent school staff from sharing information with relevant agencies where that information may help to protect a child. If any member of staff receives a request from a pupil or parent to see child protection records, they will refer the request to the Data Protection Officer.

34.2 Storing Information

Child protection information will be stored separately from the pupil's school file, and the school file will be 'tagged' to indicate that separate information is held. It will be stored and handled in line with the school's Records Retention Policy and Data Protection Policy.

35. Special Circumstances

35.1 Looked After Children

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse or neglect. The school ensures that staff have the necessary skills and understanding to keep looked after children safe. Appropriate staff have information about a child's looked after status and care arrangements, including the level of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after the child. The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children and the DSL have details of the child's social worker and the name and contact details of the local authority's Virtual School Head.

35.2 Children who have a Social Worker

Children may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. Local authorities will share this information with us, and the DSL will hold and use this information to inform decisions about safeguarding and promoting the child's welfare.

35.3 Work Experience

The school has detailed procedures to safeguard pupils undertaking work experience, including arrangements for checking people who provide placements and supervise pupils on work experience, which are in accordance with statutory guidance.

35.4 Children Staying with Host Families

The school may make arrangements for pupils to stay with host families, for example during a foreign exchange trip or sports tour. When we do, we follow the guidance set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 to ensure hosting arrangements are as safe as possible.

Schools cannot obtain criminal record information from the Disclosure and Barring Service about adults abroad. Where pupils stay with host families abroad, we will agree with partner organisations a shared understanding of the safeguarding arrangements. Our Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure the arrangements are sufficient to safeguard our pupils and will include ensuring pupils understand who to contact should an emergency occur, or a situation arise, which makes them feel uncomfortable. We will also make parents aware of these arrangements.

Some overseas pupils may reside with host families during school terms, and we will work with the local authority to check that such arrangements are safe and suitable.

35.5 Private Fostering Arrangements

A private fostering arrangement occurs when someone other than a parent or a close relative cares for a child for a period of 28 days or more, with the agreement of the child's parents. It applies to children under the age of 16 or aged under 18 if the child is disabled. By law, a parent, private foster carer, or other persons involved in making a private fostering arrangement must notify children's services as soon as possible.

Where a member of staff becomes aware that a pupil may be in a private fostering arrangement, they will tell the DSL, and the school will notify the local authority of the circumstances.

36. Appendix One – Four Categories of Abuse

It is vital that staff are also aware of the range of behavioural indicators of abuse and neglect and report any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. It is the responsibility of staff to report their concerns.

All staff should be aware that abuse, neglect, exploitation and safeguarding issues are rarely stand-alone events that can be covered by one definition or label.

In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another. All staff are also aware of the indicators of abuse, neglect, exploitation and modern slavery, understanding that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of school, inside and outside of home, and online.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Indicators of Physical Abuse

The following may be indicators of physical abuse:

- Have bruises, bleeding, burns, bites, fractures or other injuries.
- Show signs of pain or discomfort.
- Keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather.
- Be concerned about changing for PE or swimming.
- An injury that is not consistent with the account given.
- Symptoms of drug or alcohol intoxication or poisoning.
- Inexplicable fear of adults or over-compliance.
- Violence or aggression towards others, including bullying.
- Isolation from peers.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or making fun of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the

exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Indicators of Emotional Abuse

The following may be indicators of emotional abuse:

- The child consistently describes him/herself in negative ways.
- Over-reaction to mistakes.
- Delayed physical, mental or emotional development.
- Inappropriate emotional responses or fantasies.
- Self-harm.
- Drug or solvent abuse.
- Running away.
- Appetite disorders such as anorexia nervosa or bulimia.
- Soiling, smearing faeces, or enuresis.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or penetration with an object) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse.

Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Indicators of Sexual Abuse

The following may be indicators of sexual abuse:

- Sexually explicit play or behaviour or age-inappropriate knowledge.
- Aggressive behaviour including sexual harassment or molestation.
- Reluctance to undress for PE or swimming.
- Anal or vaginal discharge, soreness or scratching.
- Bruises or scratches in the genital area.
- Reluctance to go home.
- Refusal to communicate.
- Depression or withdrawal.
- Isolation from peer groups.
- Eating disorders, for example anorexia nervosa and bulimia.
- Self-harm.
- Substance abuse.

- Acquiring gifts such as money or a mobile phone from new 'friends'.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment).
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger.
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers).
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Indicators of Neglect

The following may be indicators of neglect:

- Constant hunger or stealing, scavenging and/or hoarding food.
- Frequent tiredness.
- Frequently dirty or unkempt.
- Poor attendance or often late.
- Poor concentration.
- Illnesses or injuries that are left untreated.
- Failure to achieve developmental milestones or to develop intellectually or socially.
- Responsibility for activity that is not age appropriate such as cooking, ironing or caring for siblings.
- The child is left at home alone or with inappropriate carers.